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'Conflict,' 'pressure' charged

Commissioner hits
Senate chairman

By BUD VESTAL
(Press Lansing Bureau)

LANSING — The State Senate insurance chairman was charged with conflict of interest and "pressure" attempts today by outgoing insurance commissioner Allen L. Mayerson.

Mayerson added that other legislators have berated him because their auto insurance was canceled, and in the case of six lawmakers he informed the insurance companies which then reinstated the policies "because they had not known the persons involved were legislators."

Mayerson will leave his post Thursday after a stormy year during which many legislators attacked him for "moonlighting" as an actuarial consultant for an insurance company while in office.

He said today that Senate Insurance Chairman Bernard F. O'Brien, D-Detroit, became "hostile" to his insurance department and legislation that it seeks after he ordered investigation of what he termed a thinly disguised insurance sales scheme by an insurance committee investigator hired by O'Brien.

O'Brien is an agent for several insurance companies as is the investigator—Peter Bill, Sr., of Dearborn Heights, a \$45-a-day employee of O'Brien's committee and a salaried employee of the United Insurance Company of America.

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Mayerson said he has ordered a 10-day suspension for two agents of United Insurance who were briefed by Bill on how to make a "survey" of Michigan farmers after passage of a new workmen's compensation act that affected farmers employing three or more hands.

Several farmers complained that Bill's agents tried to sell them insurance against farmhands' injury claims while making a "survey" of farmer attitudes toward the new act.

Bill has become a shadow man in Senate affairs, subject to many questions and few answers, because O'Brien has touted him as "recommended by President Johnson" and hinted at connections with the federal Central Intelligence Agency.

Inquiry about Bill reveals no White House "in" but does show that Bill flunked casualty insurance agent's examinations twice, in 1953 and 1957.

Mayerson, who is leaving his post to return to the University of Michigan business school faculty, was bitter about O'Brien's power over insurance legislation and over the insurance industry in Michigan.

He said 10 bills proposed by the Insurance Department—eight of them already passed by the House—are bottled up in O'Brien's committee with no chance of passage.

According to Insurance Department records, Sen. O'Brien is an agent for a number of life and casualty insurance companies.